

MINGLED WINE

ANNA BUNSTON

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MINGLED WINE

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

“LEAVES FROM A WOMAN'S MANUSCRIPT”

(Out of print)

MINGLED WINE

BY

ANNA BUNSTON

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

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TO THOSE AT WEST HILL, EASTBOURNE, AND ALL
THE FRIENDS OF MY SCHOOL DAYS

“What happens to oneself happens to another.”
—*De Profundis*.

THANKS ARE DUE TO THE EDITORS OF

The Academy,
Country Life,
The Guardian, and
The Saturday Review,

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MINGLED WINE

HARMONIES

NO hammer fell, no heavy axe was heard
When Earth was formed, but Alleluias rang
And all the morning stars together sang.
And when God would redeem her through the Word,
Angelic throats and wings moved as one bird
In melody ; and still where water falls
Or forest creature to its fellow calls
Or leaf is fluttered, there is music stirred.

And yet the fragrant lily silent blows
With head bent down to catch the bee's low bruit ;
So may my tuneless spirit as she grows
Be bowed before the Lord, responsive, mute,
Obedient as Ilion's walls, that rose
In soundless beauty to the sun-god's lute.

“LOVE KINDLES GOODLY FIRE”

COULD I, like Petrarch, take a single word
And, winging it with rich conceit and rhyme,
Send it for ever like a magic bird,

Singing down all the avenues of time—

Could I, like Dante, to one lovely praise

Make tributary Paradise and Hell :

Or weave, inheritor of Landor's bays,

Round one sweet sound, one rich peculiar spell—

Could I, with Shakespeare, for one darling fame

Become immortal, challenge farthest years,

Defy all time—I still must hide thy name,

By fate ordained to silence and to tears !—

Yet shall that name be praised when angels see

How, like a gracious spell, it works in me.

LOVE

“ Its absolute incapacity of offence.”

—WALTER PATER, in *Gaston de Latour*.

WHY wilt thou so laboriously excuse
Thy long and often absences from me ?
Or when did I thy wanderings accuse
Or plant a hedge about thy liberty ?
I must have waited all thy faith to prove
If I would love thee for thy faithfulness ;
I loved because it was my will to love
And my love stands in my will's steadfastness.
Thou sayest thou hast won a second youth,
Right well I know it, thou hast stolen mine,
But never shalt thou filch away my truth,
Which stays my own although all else be thine :

Then knock no more, who canst not lose the key,
Since thee I love, and not thy love of me.

“AD EXTREMAS TENEBRAS”

I HEAR the lapping of the waves of death
In Stygian wells,
I see the white-winged moths that bring the breath
Of Asphodels ;

I feel how steeply slopes toward the night
This awful track,
And see the narrowing disk of life and light
When I look back.

The flowers of Enna falling from my hand
Already die,
I follow dumbly to the starless land
Too tired to sigh.

Yet if, oh dread Aidoneus, one like me
May ask a boon,
I pray it may not be Persephone
Who meets me soon :

For in her heavy hair there still are gleams
Of former gold,
And in her sombre eyes lurk hopes and dreams
Of springs untold.

GOD'S FORESTRY

She doth but winter in thy realms, O Dis,
Not nest with thee,
Her regal mouth still haunted by a kiss
Would weary me.

But let there meet me one, too poor for scorn,
Dim-eyed and hoar,
Wan as Demeter when she sat forlorn
By Celeus' door.

And let Tiresias come, who, shrinking, knows
A woman's heart,
To guide my feet where Lethe coldest flows,
And pitying yew its darkest covert grows
Far off, apart.

GOD'S FORESTRY

THERE is a tree so dear to Heaven
That God would send new sun, new rain
Ere He would let one sapling wither,
One single seed be set in vain :
It is the tree of Humble Courage,
And grows but in the soil of Pain.

LOVE'S DENIAL

NAY, snatch me not from the brands
Where Demophoön like I lie,
Till for thee the god shall be born,
For thee the woman shall die.

Laid here by immortal hands
I endure the fiery ruth
To bring thee ambrosial balm,
To win thee perpetual youth.

Then leave me among the brands
Till their red strength enter me,
And out of the heart of the flame
I will come as a god to thee.

“THE CHILDREN OF THE DESOLATE”

“She shall have fruit when God visiteth Souls.”

—*Wisdom of Solomon.*

A WOMAN bowed herself beneath her pain,
Her own wan hands propped up her heavy head,
That might not find a more endeared bed
Nor pillow on a human breast again.
“Some sow in tears to gather golden grain,
And such a mother’s agony,” she said,
“Yet strong men pity it, but far more dread
Are lonely women’s throes, and all in vain.”

And when her fragile hands had overthrown
Th’ Apollyon of grief, she took her place
And played her minor part with patient grace,
Nor knew that she had offspring of each moan—
Of Pain begot, conceived in Pain alone,
Yet stamped with every trait of Beauty’s race.

IN MAY

HOW were our spirits moved when first we felt
Love's freightage on the lips !
They heaved beneath that burden as the sea
Beneath the Tyrian ships.

“THE SLINGS AND ARROWS”

AH ! now I know I am not yet accurst,
Since Life has deemed me worthy of his might,
Allowing all his veteran rage to burst
Upon my head. On then ! Renew the fight !

BRUGES

O BRUGES, upon the waters,
How fair thy turrets throng !
And all thy roofs are pictures,
And every bridge a song.

And softly glide thy barges
By poplar-bordered quays,
And sweetly from thy belfry
Float poems on the breeze.

Thy gentle sons could pencil
Old legends of the Rhine,
St. Ursule and her maidens,
Scenes quaint and scenes divine ;

And happy hands still fashion
Things beautiful and rare,
And time with thee, is music,
And art with thee, is prayer.

O Bruges, upon the waters,
All grace to thee belongs,
And all thy roofs are pictures,
And all thy bridges songs.

“WHO CAN TELL HOW OFT HE
OFFENDETH?”

WHENEVER humbly I begin
To search my heart and own to Thee
My great perversity and sin,
Thou hinderest me.

How can I tell what evil drifts
Beneath the bench, behind the door,
When, everywhere I turn, Thy gifts
Fill all the floor?

Miserere is not said
Ere Benedictus is begun ;
O visit not upon my head
What Thou hast done !

CARE NOT FOR KEYS

CARE not for keys : no stranger can intrude
To scan the parchments of a private grief,
Nor shall thy best and nearest interfere.
The wave may whisper to the darkling wood,
The wind betray thee to the hunted leaf
But never tongue of man to mortal ear.

EASTER

LIGHT streams from out the open tomb,
Yet the cross is on the hill ;
New radiance hath dispersed the gloom,
But the shadow falleth still.

RĀDHA TO RĀM LĪLA

STILL in the moonlight gleam Himālayan snows,
The sacred Tāj with pearly radiance glows
Between her towers and cypress sentinels,
And still the Jumna to the Ganges flows.

The orange garden scents the evening breeze,
The same grey squirrels haunt the tamarind trees,
And where white oxen work the creaking wells
About the oleanders hum the bees.

Still in the ghāts the funeral fires are red,
The city echoes where the bridegrooms wed,
And women plait the wreaths of marigold,
And pour the nard and balsam on the head.

And still, Rām Līla, still I keep my pain,
And all the sounds and scents of earth are vain
Till kisses ripen on a dead man's lips,
And till a tongue of ashes speaks again.

IF YOU WERE HERE

THESE flowers would lose their wistfulness,
And dance to celebrate our love,
This twilight stay her wing to bless
If you were here !

With your two hands for priceless cup
This brook would yield the wine of life,
And we in ecstasy would sup
If you were here !

I should not feel the pain of years
Vibrating in the thrush's song,
Nor watch the west through falling tears
If you were here !

THE WILDERNESS

FROM Life's enchantments,
Desire of place,
From lust of getting
Turn thou away and set thy face
Toward the wilderness.

The tents of Jacob
As valleys spread,
As goodly cedars
Or fair lign aloes, white and red,
Shall share thy wilderness.

With awful judgments,
The law, the rod,
With soft allurements
And comfortable words, will God
Pass o'er the wilderness.

The bitter waters
Are healed and sweet,
The ample heavens
Pour angel's bread about thy feet
Throughout the wilderness.

THE WILDERNESS

And Carmel's glory
Thou thoughtest gone,
And Sharon's roses,
The excellency of Lebanon
Delight thy wilderness.

Who passeth Jordan
Perfumed with myrrh,
With myrrh and incense?
Lo! on His arm Love leadeth her
Who trod the wilderness.

PRISONERS

FATE, the gaoler, flung us down together
In a dungeon by the sea;
Our ankles were sore fretted by the irons,
We had nor file, nor key.
Then of our hair we took the fine, soft tresses,
And wove them carefully,
And stooping down we swathed each other's fetters
In webs of sympathy.

GARDENING SONG

WHEN I am in my garden
I am a monk of old
Illuminating missals
With blue and green and gold.
In cunning burnish'd letters
He wrote the Name of God,
In daffodils and tulips
I print it on the sod.

When I am in my garden
I am of Aaron's race,
A Levite, a precentor
Who, in a holy place,
For God's sake and for music's
At Matins, Nones, and Prime,
Sets every psalm and anthem
To fitting tune and time.

When I am in my garden
I am the bridegroom's friend,
With charge of all the jewels
That he delights to send ;

GARDENING SONG

The turquoise myosotis,
Narcissus, ruby-eyed,
Imperial crowns of amber—
I bear them to the bride.

When I am in my garden
My heart's a truant lark,
My humbler limbs bend earthward,
I sing and serve till dark ;
And when God takes the candle
I rise from off my knee
And hear the odours breathing
The Name I cannot see.

When I am in my garden
I am a monk of old,
Illuminating missals
With blue and green and gold.
In cunning burnish'd letters
He wrote the Name of God,
In basil sweet and mignonette
I print it on the sod.

AT LAST

THIS is the wood oft visited in dreams,
The longed-for scent of pines is in the air,
And this the pictured beech whose foliage streams
Like tresses of some mighty angel's hair.

But now, too late, my very feet may stand
Where long the unsubstantial dream feet stood ;
Regret hath marshalled here her phantom band,
And left no place for joy in all the wood.

HONOUR TO WHOM HONOUR

BRING burnished vessels and brodered vail,
And a fair linen cloth for the board ;
But you and I are the true San Graal—
Mankind is the Cup of the Lord.

GOD WILL COME HOME

GOD will come home to His saints,
Come to them one by one,
As down to puddle, and pool, and blot
Comes home the infinite sun.

A GREAT MYSTERY

“ Shall I, the gnat which dances in Thy ray,
Dare to be reverent ? ”

—COVENTRY PATMORE.

STRANGELY, strangely, Lord, this morning
Camest Thou beneath my roof,
Shorn of all Thy royal adorning,
Stripp'd of judgment and reproof,
The King of kings yet gladly scorning,
Every plea but love's behoof.
“ Can this be God ? ” I said, “ who enters,
This be God who climbs my stair ?
God sits high in heavenly centres,
And though He hath us in His care,
'Tis as His adopted children,
Slaves redeemed from Satan's snare.
God is mightier than the mountains,
Far more majesty would wear,
This One comes like summer fountains,
Hath no snow upon His hair.
With eagle pinions God will cover
Those who seek for refuge there,
But these are dove-like wings that hover,
God was never half so fair.”

A GREAT MYSTERY

Then with voice like falling water
Viewless angels sang to me,
Fear not thou, O virgin daughter,
Thy King desires thy poverty.

At that "Ave Maria"
I arose and I obeyed ;
O my King Cophetua,
I, Thy blessed beggar-maid,
Who once lay among the potsherds
Stand in silver plumes arrayed ;
I, who lonely in the vineyards
Morn and noon and evening strayed,
Now am wrapt in Thine embraces,
'Neath Thy banner "Love" am laid,
Made partaker of Thy graces,
I, the outcast beggar-maid.

No excuse and no invention
Make me less unworthy Thee,
No prostration, no pretension
Of unique humility,
But Thy glorious condescension
Blazes through my misery,
And Thy love finds full extension
In the nothingness of me.
Dark my soul, yet Thou hast sought her,
My night allows Thy day to shine,

A GREAT MYSTERY

Thou the grape art, I the water—
Both together make the wine.
I the clay and Thou the craftsman,
I the boat and Thou the strand,
I the pencil, Thou the draughtsman,
I the harp and Thou the hand.

But the world with envy raging
Fain would snatch me, Lord, from Thee,
And Death and Hell their war are waging,
Therefore go not far from me.
By the mystery of this housel,
By this momentary truth,
By the love of this espousal,
By this kindness of my youth,
By Thy promise of remembrance,
By that sweet perversity
That makes my dark uncomely semblance
Seem desirable to Thee—
Leave me not lest faith should falter,
O! secure my fealty,
I the victim on Thine altar,
Thou the fire consuming me.

AT BURPHAM

As when a maid awakes at matin toll,
With mouth still pouted to a half-dreamt kiss,
So, by this beauty strangely stirred, my soul
Leans to some partly apprehended bliss.
I dimly feel, and yet in vain would read
The darling secret of this day's blue eye :
Hear what the river tells the willow weed
The while he weds her to the stooping sky.
I only know this comes, O God, from Thee—
A straying leaf from bays about Thy hair
Or fragment of Thy raiment's broidery—
Since none but Thou couldst leave a trace so fair.

For still we question every floating thing
For news of absent Love's imperial wing.

THE HIMALAYAS BY NIGHT

MY pathway seems the hem of very night,
For nothing save a slender wooden fence
Keeps me from utter space with blackness dense,
A mouth of death, that never tasted light.
Beyond the horrid gulf lies height on height—
Darkness on darkness heaped ; and every sense
Responds to something dreadful and immense—
The crouching figure of incarnate Might.

Austere as fate and terrible as law
The mountains stand and hide their breasts of snow
Till longing winds of midnight fail and swoon.
The spell increases—awful hands withdraw
Each cloudy cloak—the veils are rent, and lo,
The gleaming Titans naked neath the moon !

SONG

BLAME the cuckoo that in June
He cannot sing the April tune ;

Blame the flowers that at night
The brightest is but pearly white ;

The earth that cannot keep till noon
The kisses gathered from the moon,

But never blame thy fellow man
If love should end as love began.

FAMILIAR GRIEF, INTIMATE JOY

“Our sweetest songs are those
That tell of saddest thought.”

—SHELLEY.

WHEN Grief has gone a-maying
The thorns may show a tress,
Dim waters be betraying
The colour of her dress.

Grief doth not alway blind us,
And men have read her eyes ;
She sometimes falls behind us,
That we may count her sighs.

Not so with Joy. None view him,
Yet, when he takes his flight,
Men rise up and pursue him
To dumb and earless night.

LOVE'S MORNING

I INTO the shadowland of Yesterday
The night has flown on unreturning wings :
This night whose moments were our golden strings
Whereon those passionate melodies to play
Of which the echoes all about us stay
With hints of incommunicable things :
This night, whereof no dawn oblivion brings,
Nor any step of all our ultimate way.

So now, as one who leaves the Sacrament
To read the Word, I loose thy hands, my sweet,
That so my reasonable soul may greet
And be conformed to thine—the day be spent
In converse intimate, night find us blent
In union more essential, more complete.

HAUNTED

MY little child, how can you stand
And fondle me and show no fears,
Nor cease your undertone of song?
You do not guess a ghostly hand
Was stretched across the gulf of years
And held these fingers all night long.

THE LYCHGATE

THE very type of human love it stands,
And offers men brief rest, a little space
Wherein to press a kiss on folded hands
And veil a fading face.

ON QUARLEY DOWN

ON Quarley Down, on Quarley Down
The trees grow straight, the trees grow tall,
And there the Romans set their camp,
And girdled it with moat and wall.

On Quarley Down, on Quarley Down
A man may see three counties lie,
But never an eagle standard flap,
Nor a Roman foot pass by.

On Quarley Down, on Quarley Down
A man may hear the wind and trees,
But never a word of the Roman tongue,
Nor a snatch of their martial melodies.

On Quarley Down, on Quarley Down
An ancient bed I lay upon,
For I lay sleeping in the moat
Dug nigh two thousand years ago.

On Quarley Down, on Quarley Down
The trees grow straight, the trees grow tall,
And God send peace to those dead men
Whose ditch is their memorial !

WOMEN AND WOMEN

ALL women cry to men ; for some cry “ Give ! ”
By day and night : a ravenous life they live,
Devouring gift and giver ; then they die
In giving birth to wailing misery ;

And some cry “ Be—be men ! ” : though few arise
To do the bidding of their wistful eyes,
Death to those virgins comes with Gabriel’s wings,
And from their dust the flower of manhood springs.

“ WE STUDY TO UTTER OUR
PAINFUL SECRET ”

—EMERSON.

COMPLETE confession never yet was made,
For truth is far too subtle for the tongue,
Too fine and fluent even for the eye—
The human heart is still unsaid, unsung.

“GOD PLANTED A TREE”

I KNOW a far and quiet beech-crowned height
Where rest abides. There, blue-grey boles
among,
The shy and fragile angel of delight
May spread her wings. A misty arras hung
Shuts out the troublous world, whose seething ill,
Whose threadbare pleasure, sordid loss and gain,
Reach not to that sequestered holy hill,
Nor mar that vaulted silver-pillared fane,
But there are hymned alone the mystic ways
Of God. Wind instruments begin, and then
The fallen leaves dance lightly to His praise,
And infant buds leap up to cry “Amen !”

To that far shrine I went to woo the trees,
Adore the pillars of the temple, bend
Before the Monstrance, but as one who sees
Its beauty only, not its use and end.
Thy bough, blest beech ! received me—all my sighs
Were hushed by healing breath that fanned my
face,
And, looking up, I saw thy steadfast eyes
Grown deep with dreaming of unearthly grace.

“GOD PLANTED A TREE”

From what high generous lineage art thou sprung?
Beneath what star conceived? No heralds trace
Thy long descent; no bard hath ever sung.

The early exploits of thy noble race.
The axe itself prevaieth not with thee,
For though it rend, triumphant over loss,
Thou still shalt serve in strong serenity,
Shaped to man's cradle or his saving cross.

And yet thy last is still thy loveliest breath,
Dying beneficent, transfigured, bright,
Illuminating all the paths of death,
Wrapped in a flaming sacrifice from sight!
O tree, compact of earth and air and dew!

O happy tree! instruct me in thy lore
Of dying ever, being ever new;

To be in beauty fixed, yet evermore
To vary in the mode of beauty; be
Accosted by rude winds or winning tone
Of passionate suns and moons most sisterly,
Yet, buffeted or flattered, still to own
Such peace, communicable, exquisite.

O tree, transcending earth and air and dew,
O blessed tree, in beauty infinite,

Sweet harbour, friend unfailing, priest most true,
Type of the tree whose leaves are healing balm
For all the world,—conversing with the skies

Thy boughs have won this confidence and calm,
This power on earth to breathe of Paradise!

TEMPTATION

THE floods arise—O God, the floods arise,
And wash my slain from out their burial sands;
O hide me from the onslaught of their eyes,
The frightful siege of their unhallowed hands!

THE POINT OF VIEW

YOU think it noblest to refrain
From songs of grief;
You make a secret of your pain—
Oh, unbelief!

Shall matron brows and necks be bare
As those of girls?
And shall the bride, then, never wear
The Bridegroom's pearls?

FROST

EARTH bows herself before the frost to-night,
Her pleasant hair, the grass, is changed and white,
Her songs are hush'd, her sighs have died away,
She lies in silence, passive, cold, and grey.

The moon looks down. She scorns the shallow
peace,
The calm of Age, and cries : "Shall tumult cease
Because a bird is dead, a brook is bound ?
In me alone is final stillness found."

Yet other rest we craved, O pulseless Moon ;
We sought the sunlit peace of summer noon,
A glowing hour fulfilled with life and light
And consummation won,—but lo, the night !

Our house of clay will soon be frosted o'er,
Our fledgeling hopes lie dead upon the floor,
And many a flower must fail, and fair device,
And many a purling stream be sealed with ice.

FROST

Yet safe in green recesses of the heart
A passionate thrush still sits and broods apart ;
And down in caverns where no frost assails
The solemn voice of water still prevails.

Though Mirth and Tears, oh frosty Age, sleep well,
And all seems quiet as a convent cell,
Yet Life still wakes behind her curtains drawn,
And sighs for spring and supplicates the dawn.

WHEN LOVE CAME IN TO ME

THE raging, roaring, hungry blast
 Shook land and sea,
The blinding rain fell thick and fast,
 And dread the thunder's minstrelsy :
The lightning, flashing fell and bright,
Alone relieved the rayless night
 When Love came in to me.

My ruined hut upon the plain—
 Ah, misery !—
No shelter gave from wind or rain.
 Love knocked. I cried, "Pass on, let be,
Here dwell but want and wan despair."
For bed and board and hearth were bare
 When Love came in to me.

Love raised the latch. Lo ! overhead
 The ivy tree
And traveller's joy a roof had spread,
 The board was set full daintily ;
The pine logs' blaze lit all the dome,
The hut became a fairy home
 When Love came in to me.

THE DEAD PRAISE NOT THEE,
O GOD

WE are alone : the dead who sleeping lie,
And I who mow the grass above their head.
Since I still move, I say : "The dead—and I,"
But had I thought of what it is to die,
And what to live, I might have simply said,
"We dead."

"IS IT NOT BRAVE TO BE A KING,
TECHELLES?"

—TAMBURLAINE THE GREAT.

NOT wholly disinherited ! for sky
And answering sea, for valley, plain and hill
Still yield their tribute to my sovereign eye,
And, Eden lost, I have some lordship still.

COME BACK !

O H why did you heed, Eugene,
The signs that she made to you ?
Death is a coz'ning queen ;
Why did you kiss her frozen face,
Courting her ruthless iron embrace ?
Come back, come back, Eugene, Eugene !

Come back in your youth, Eugene,
Or come in your naked bones
Out of your grave of green ;
Come in your armour, clanking, bright,
Come in your shroud, too long, too white—
Come back, come back, Eugene, Eugene !

I listen all night, Eugene,
For hoofs of a spectral horse,
Into the dark I lean,
Ready to ride with you and be
Galloping out to eternity—
Come back, come back, Eugene, Eugene !

The winds know your name, Eugene,
They shriek it aloud, aloud ;
Ah, though you lie between
Breasts of the bride whom none desert,
Leave her a moment, heal my hurt,
Come back for me, Eugene, Eugene !

TO EUGENE

STILL keep the habit of your love,
And if I reach the minaret
Wherein the shining stairs are set,
And lift my hungry eyes above,
From some bright outpost look, and lean
To welcome me, Eugene.

PENIEL

MY Rachel and my Benjamin, O Lord,
Have passéd over with the flocks and herds.
I watch with awful night beside the ford ;
My hands are guilty. Stains of lying words
Are thick upon my lips ; yet must I pray.
Whether Thy Presence lame me, leave me dumb,
Cast scales upon mine eyes, or slay me quite,
My heart and flesh cry, " God of Bethel, Come ! "

HEARTS AND SLEEVES

YOU fear I am too frank,
And wear my heart upon a sleeve?
Which heart? Which sleeve?
Had I as many gowns to wear
As Queen Elizabeth,
I'd set a heart upon them all
And still have hearts to spare.

"But then I often show
A heart that grieves?"
I know, I know;
Out of the store within my breast
I take one little throe,
Like a button from a vest,
And pin it on my arm.
It hurts me less to wear it so,
And—trims my sleeves.

The heart is like a vain coquette
And drinks publicity like dew.
Scatter her portraits broadcast, then
Proclaim her eyes of blue,

HEARTS AND SLEEVES

Her yellow hair,
Her cheeks' red hue,
Sing many things of her
Or false or true,
Perhaps the jade will then consent
To stay at home with you.
But he, who in his jealousy
All portraiture denies,
Is fooled the more,
And while he tries
To hide mere sketch or script,
His very heart looks out at us
From his two eyes.

TO A STRANGER

YOU who turn to look on me,
You seem to pity what you see ;—
Lips on phantom kisses fed,
Eyes familiar with the dead,
Hands that clasp a shadow tight,
Feet that track a lost delight,
Breast where memory panting lies,
Hair stirred by disembodied sighs—
Yet you who turn to look on me
You need not pity what you see :
The valley's depth proclaims the height,
The shadow testifies to light,
Joy's noons are set 'twixt night and night ;
And you, who turn to look on me,
You see but what there *is* to see,
And not what was or what will be.

TO ONE LONG ABSENT

WHEN the Bridegroom comes with a surging
sound,

And the wheels of His saints are as wind on the
sands ;

When the hills and the valleys break forth and sing,
And the trees are clapping their hands :

When the ships of Tarshish are safely moored,
And our sons and our daughters come from afar—

When Sharon's shepherds are folding flocks,
And the myrtle displays her star :

When the warriors ride on their horses white,
And the foremost is called "the Faithful and
True"—

Will He chide if, ere I embrace His feet,
I run and catch hands with you ?

TO FAME

ALAS ! for any Latmian boy who durst
Excite thine ardours, Fame ! Thou wilt reject
Him in an hour, and leave him, lone, accurst,
To shiver through long winters of neglect.
Capricious goddess ! hugging dead men's bones,
Embracing scanty hair'd senility,
Or dooméd youths, whose cruel death atones
The strange bright sin of being loved by thee,
Thy broideries are moss, thy borders mould,
And all thy raiment smells of dust and clay,
Thy brow is hard, thy narrow lips are cold,
Thine eyes belie what thy false mouth doth say :

And yet, alluring mistress, turn awhile
And snare me also with a single smile !

TO A YOUNG POET

GO, like Hippolytus, to win thee bays
In the Athenian games. Go, gather fame
To splendid youth and beauty and the praise
Of exile proudly borne, and make thy name
Beloved of Artemis. Yet wear renown
As one who needs it not, since that bright head
The dignity of death too soon shall crown,
And all thy comely locks be smeared with red.
Or spread, Daedalian boy, thy pinions fair,
And mount above our landmarks one by one ;
But let thy proud wings court the middle air,
And never flaunt them near the jealous sun.

Alas ! I see white limbs that ocean laves
With all her sullen, unrelenting waves.

“AN ETERNAL EXCELLENCY”

WILT thou indeed raise up
The former desolation,
Give unto us the cup
And garments of salvation?
Thyself wipe off the tears
Of those whom Thou hast beaten,
Restore to us the years
The canker-worm hath eaten?

Shall longing Tyre then clasp
Her promised holy hiring?
And shall a mortal's grasp
At last fit his desiring?
Shall life disclose no fang,
And time no thorn discover?
Shall beauty breed no pang,
No change confound the lover?

Ah! what this sudden cloud
The halcyon day belying?
Lo! doves that call aloud
Back to their windows flying;

“AN ETERNAL EXCELLENCY”

Men's hopes come home to roost,
Men's hopes no longer mocking,
From death's low dungeons loosed
Back to their windows flocking.

For brass and iron alloy,
Lo ! gold and silver flashes,
For mourning—oil of joy,
And beauty after ashes.
For garb of heaviness
The robes of praise enwoven,
For dread of bitterness
The sense of sweet things proven.

The spring shall have no frost,
The summer heat no thunder,
No early bloom be lost,
No oak be riven asunder.
To us shall then belong
Joy's overflowing fountains,
To us the midnight song
And piping on the mountains.

The very glorious Lord,
At whose step Carmel quivers,
Shall be our Great Reward,
Our place of streams and rivers ;

“AN ETERNAL EXCELLENCY”

He, where no candles are,
Shall be our Sun that shineth,
Our bright and morning Star,
Our moon that not declineth.

Is it indeed no fable,
And shall we see God there,
When death has made us able
To breathe our native air ?
O God our Help, O God,
Our painful furrow keeping,
May we so turn the sod
So cast the seed ere sleeping,
That we may have such reaping,
Such laughter after weeping,
Have harvest-home, and God !

MEMORY

DEAR as the brief October sun,
Or red fruit on the sombre yew,
Or robin's song when summer's done,
Is Memory.

Sharper than frost's two-edgéd breath,
Or any wind that ever blew,
More salt than all the Seas of Death
Is Memory.

“SIC ITUR AD ASTRA”

THERE is no beauty on this earth
But in dead beauty had its birth.
When the bird beholds the sun
A painted eggshell lies undone ;
When the east is red with day
A night of stars has passed away ;
Every rose's open bloom
Is a tender rosebud's tomb ;
And where a man stands perfected
There, a lovely boy is dead.
Then let thy meaner joys be hire,
And grudge not, for thy heart's desire ;
And know that none hath been so wise
He hath not seen the searching eyes
And pallid features of Regret,
Who, where the happiest are met,
Will come in spite of wind or rain
And stare in through the window-pane.

Yea, even mid the rapture sweet
When Adam did our mother greet,

“SIC ITUR AD ASTRA”

He perchance must check a sigh
For the pensive days gone by ;
For those quiet tunnell'd places,
Those vaulted, green and leafy spaces
Where, beneath the speechless skies,
With undiverted mind and eyes,
On the silent moss he trod
Alone among the works of God.

CHRISTOPHER? OR SINBAD?

SINGING careless through the forest
In the month of May,
I met Love among the bracken
And, all in wanton play,
Flung the babe upon my shoulder,
Carried him away,
Singing careless through the forest
In the month of May.

I bore Love upon my shoulder,
The babe became a boy,
Kept me merry with his laughter,
With his manners coy ;
And I went lightly through the forest,
Sang low notes of joy,
For that Love was on my shoulder
And was grown a boy.

Love grew up, Love grew too quickly,
His weight was hard to bear,
And when I tried to toss him from me
He held me by the hair,

CHRISTOPHER? OR SINBAD?

Till I went softly through the forest
Full of silent care,
For that Love was grown a tyrant
And was hard to bear.

My burden soon will sink or save me,
The river is at hand,
And, as I stumble on, I wonder
If I shall win to land,
And in what guise this Love I carry
Will then before me stand,
For I cannot see his features,
And the river is at hand.

TO FATE

THOUGH you should toss one up to heaven
And hurl one down to hell,
How say of two so interwoven
Which rose or fell?

“FÜR DEN TOT IST KEIN KRAUT
GEWACHSEN”

—*German Proverb.*

THERE grows no herb for death.
We may not cull the leaf
By light of noon
Or midnight moon
That can restore the breath
Or win man back to grief.

When all green things were bred
Great God withheld one seed,
He kept from earth
One noxious birth,
And, pitying His dead,
He disallowed one weed.

Though all men may disturb
The pain whom once we slew,
And lift his head
From his low bed,
And gather many a herb
To quicken him anew,

TOT IST KEIN KRAUT GEWACHSEN

Yet we shall lie full deep
Where blows no teasing breath ;
Nor pain nor men
Shall wake again
Whom God has put to sleep.
There grows no herb for death.

ACTUM EST !

AS one returning to native mountains,
Treading buoyantly, firm and free,
Drawing deep breath from ethereal fountains,
So was I then enlarged in thee.

As one not thankless, yet scarcely heeding
Song or silence, or rain or sun,
Because of the pain of his two feet bleeding,
So am I now, alone, undone.

NOVEMBER TREES

O SAD November trees,
Be not so fond in grief ;
Came not the birth of this year's bud
Through death of last year's leaf ?

THE VENTURE

THE sea-gull sits and shivers
Beside her narrow nest,
Her cloudy pinion quivers,
Her eyes in vain would test
The strength of unsubstantial air,
The truth of the inconstant sea :
Shall she cleave to solid earth,
Hug the cliff that saw her birth,
Or those untempted regions dare,
And venture utterly ?

Where eastern stars are gleaming
Above an eastern hill,
A mortal wanders dreaming
And hesitating still
Between the low imperious call—
The soul's instinctive sovereignty—
And all the slavish sense that prays
For common things and trodden ways,
Too cowardly to stake its all
And venture utterly.

THE VENTURE

The sea-gull flew to claim

Two realms—the sea, the sky,
And Abram's tent became

The angel's hostelry.

Ah then, though God seem vague as breath,

And Creeds inconstant as the sea :

Although thine Isaac be not born

And all thy fellows cry in scorn,

“See where the dreamer hunts the wraith !”

Let instinct lead, spread wings of faith,

And venture utterly.

TO-DAY

THE air is burdened with the cry
Of souls unblest,

And darkened by the wings of those

Who cannot rest.

Peace ! 'Tis but a summer brood

Pushed from the nest.

THE DRYAD TO THE MOON

THY woodland lovers, O sovereign moon,
Have sighed for the day's declining,
They long to follow thy silver feet
In the track of the dewdrops shining.

For thee the water her sweet breast bares,
For thee wears the lily's adorning,
In silent ecstasy holds thee close,
Nor letteth thee go till morning.

The lofty pines lift their heads to thee,
Thy light on the lone yew lingers,
For thy caresses the tortuous oaks
Hunggrily stretch their fingers.

The dainty, tremulous birchen tree
Entreats thee with tender passion,
And thou desirest her silver stem
Her delicate branches fashion.

Her fairy outline is thy delight
And the sound of her fine leaves turning.
Her leaves that stir in the wind of night
That thou mayest still their yearning.

Thy love transfigures me too, O moon,
And here in thy glorious glances
My waving hand is a lotus bloom,
My foot is a star that dances.

“SIMETHA CALLS ON HECATE”

—OSCAR WILDE, *Theocritus*.

“SIMETHA calls on Hecate.”

For seldom have we mortals loved a god
Or godlike gifts : we ask our little hod
Of yellow earth, and leave the sword, the rod :
Our cry is, “Send us now prosperity !”

“Simetha calls on Hecate.”

We have no title-deeds, and yet demand
All fiefs. Like hounds we wait on Trivia's wand,
And are not men enough to take command
And be ourselves our fortunes' deity.

“Simetha calls on Hecate.”

We bring no precious first-fruits of the will,
We lay no hand upon ourselves, but still
With honey, sheep, and dogs the altars fill,
And offer Heaven our crumbs of charity.

TO FRANCIS THOMPSON

POET, whose footsteps led by "dreadful height"
And loathsome floor of uttermost abyss,
Whose deep eyes searched the sun and night in night,
Whose lips knew golden philtres and the kiss
Of leaning stars, wormwood and bitter gall—
While now thy mortal feet lie eastward, still,
Where do thy spirit's soundless footsteps fall?
Pass they by some far peak or gleaming hill
Of Paradise, where secret music swells?
Or tread they where, through incensed arbours, flow
Celestial streams? or where, by long-wished wells
Of immortality, the amaranths blow?

Where'er they pass, save Peace, they cannot meet
Aught wholly strange of bitter or of sweet.

TO LIONEL JOHNSON

ALAS ! for the hearing of your ears,
The visions of your bed,
For the fruit of your lips, too soon withdrawn
From a world on ashes fed.

Alas ! that the lamp God gave to you
Was housed in an earthen jar,
That the pitcher broke, and the light was spilt
Like a November star.

But I think that Mary leaned from her place
At the foot of the holy throne,
And caught and kept the star that fell
As a jewel for her zone.

ON A CERTAIN SPINSTER WHO LINGERED IN CHURCH

NOT hers the hungry gaze of souls unwed ;
Not hers the cold and narrow barren bed :
Those virgin shoulders yet have pillowed men
Who through her ministry grew strong again.
She knows embraces both by night and day
Beyond all price of intermingling clay.
Man's weary cares upon her knees find rest,
His secret hopes are hanging at her breast ;
Therefore if long before the cross she bend,
'Tis not that loneliness may find a friend,
But that she takes so many with her there,
And needs must wait till each have said his prayer.

TO J. C. P.

OUR instincts, not our memories, protest
We are not wholly of this desert race
Nor Bedouin born. Our infant lips were pressed

To fairer bosoms formed with finer grace.
Yet you and I, though aliens, have known
And felt the allurements of the wilderness ;
Drawn eerie comfort from the bleached bone,
Since we in turn may share the grim caress
Of this our tawny mistress, and may lie
At last upon her large, indifferent breast.

Meanwhile we watch the mighty sunrise dye
The hedgeless east, and yield to all the zest
And glamour of great dawns. And we can fly
Our strong-winged falcon, Hope, and bid her stray
Through all the spaces of Infinity.

Not yet the sand hath choked us. We can play,
(For thou hast fashioned me a lute,) and sing
Faint songs beneath the tangled stars at night,
And marvel what the next day's march may bring,
And if to-morrow show the hills in sight.

Not all meet death in deserts. Men have found
Strange midnight shelter, stranger midnight blaze,
Clear springs and manna thick upon the ground,
Undreamt-of caravans and homeward ways.

A GRACE

FOR all the beryl, pearl and chrysoprase
Wherewith the summer binds her brow ;
The bleached raiment, meet for seraphim,
That April hangs upon the bough ;
For autumn mornings when the very stones
Are steeped in amethystine light ;
For lonely contemplations that endear
The silent winter night ;
For strength of youth, and charity of age ;
For this life's myrrh and euphrasy,
And those "sublime attractions of the grave"—
Gloria Tibi Domine !

“THOU AWAY, THE VERY BIRDS
ARE MUTE”

—SHAKESPEARE, *Sonnet*.

WHERE'S the former charm of the
thrush's trills?

The remembered music of far-off rills?

The elfin dance of dead daffodils?

Their grace is fled. Could Demeter care—

Faint for Persephone's floating hair—

That flowers of Enna were strange and fair?

For cold and dark as a candle blown,

Bare as a nest when the birds are flown,

Are spring and summer to hearts alone.

ON MEETING A REPROBATE

SMALL need to hang your head, avert your eye,
Because, in good sooth, I am passing, I.
For, though responsible for healthy blood
And privilege of birth, what actual good
Have I to set against your actual sin ?
There was so little you could lose or win
As you know values, who were taught at school
To reckon these in pounds (with many a rule
For handling money you would never see),
And made a brutè of some ability.
For you the downs are but a place for sheep,
And God's green grass is only so much "keep."
For you no goat-foot Pan pipes by the lake,
No shy, elusive dryad haunts the brake.
You have no harp at noon beneath the trees,
No harp like David's, and no melodies.
For you no angels, when the tired larks cease,
Take up the strain of joy, goodwill, and peace.
You lead your sheep from fold to fold, nor think
A Shepherd would lead you. You eat and drink,
And fill your belly with the husks of swine,
Because you never tasted Bread and Wine.

ON MEETING A REPROBATE

We kept you out from Paradise because
Ourselves were never there, nor do we pause
From our muck-raking work to think, perchance,
Clay is not all a man's inheritance.
True, ev'n for you there was a better choice,
I, too, wear sackcloth, when I might rejoice,
And had you dared to turn your eyes on me,
Mine must have dropped in shame and sympathy.
You hang upon your cross in middle air,
The cross of your misdeeds, but we who stare
Upon your death, we gave the curséd wood
And tools, our heads are heavy with your blood.
O malefactor ! could you understand,
I, fellow-thief, would ask to kiss your hand,
And offer to your lips, if you would heed,
A little sponge of love upon a reed.

THE WANDERER

MY heart is homeless as the wind,
And dark as northern waters are,
More desolate than midnight pools
That never held a star.

But like the uncompanioned sun
That goeth forth from east to west,
Or mourning, solitary moon
Arising from her rest,

To climb the steepest hills of cloud
Or sink upon an inland sea,
Beyond the ramparts of the world
I wander, lone and free.

I've heard the cry of dead men's bones
That clamour at the gates of morn,
And whimpering of naked souls
Impatient to be born,

I know the dark and loathsome caves
Of crouching Fear and writhing Shame ;
And dreadful, oozy, songless swamps
The words of sunken Fame.

THE WANDERER

I've seen the shining galaxy
Of mute, unrecognised worth,
Apparent failures bursting through
The envelope of earth.

I know the salt and bitter strand,
The terrible No More's demesne,
Lit by the cold, auroral flame
Of things that might have been.

And in the silent polar night,
With ear upon the icy ground,
Behind the footsteps of Despair
I've caught another sound,

Diffused as scent made audible,
And faint as far-off foreign peals,
The tread of final Destiny,
Hope's golden chariot wheels.

PS. CXIII. 9.

LORD, look upon my barren life,
And send me fruitful agony,
Till I, too, keep my joyful house
With Faith and Hope and Charity.

A PEOPLED SOLITUDE

THEY think I sit alone,
But, at midnight bell,
Goblin and fairy, ghost and sprite,
Seem to beleaguer my cell,
And wink and grimace where the weary light
Is nodding. A babe might tell
If I see aright.

They think I sit alone
Day after day,
But angels perhaps pass to and fro
(Sweet angels, disdain not, I pray !),
Only the dying and new-born know—
Our eyes are obscured with clay ;
But it may be so.

They think I sit alone
At peace and still ;
But ever the Serpent and holy Rood
Strive in this hut on the hill,
Corruption and health in my mortal blood,
And darkness and light in my will—
Ah, pray that the end be good !

HEAL MY HANDS!

LORD, near Thy cross, as men count nearness,
My cross stands,
And tortured like Thine own, and bleeding,
Are my hands.

Thine were wounded in the dwelling
Of Thy friends,
Yet rich blessing in their crimson
Dew descends.

And from Thy tree Thy hands are plucking
Fruit of bliss ;
Mine, in life and death, are empty—
All amiss.

Ah ! how little it beseemeth
Me to rail,
Whose own fingers drew the cordage,
Drove the nail !

Yet, remember, Lord, and pity
These my bands,
And when Thou comest to Thy Kingdom,
Heal my hands.

“BANDS IN DEATH”

WHEN you shall hear that I am dead,
And slaves of “Use and Wont” have seized
their prey,
And laid me primly on the bed,
Come to my help and send them all away.

Take the bound wrists and fling them wide,
Release the fettered feet and plaited hair ;
Toss all Death’s livery aside,
And throw the chamber open to the air.

I would have done with “decencies”
And all the petty furniture of life,
The thin deceits and vanities,
The impulse and the action still at strife.

A corpse dressed out ! A sorry sight—
A coffin too ! “The prisoned bird has fled ;
Then bind the cage”—for men by right
Are gaolers, turnkeys even of the dead.

“BANDS IN DEATH”

You, too, have loathed captivity,
The fretting rules and regulated days,
And you would give me liberty,
A brief release from goads and harnessed ways.

Shall these unsated hands be blest
By simulating folded hands that pray ?
The head, uncomforted, find rest
Upon a pillow made of churchyard clay ?

Commit me to the troubled sea,
The bed of rocking waves, the roof of cloud,
While loud winds wail an elegy,
And swaying seaweed weaves a sheet and shroud.

But I bethink me how the Lord,
The Lord of glory suffered clothes and bands,
The prying eyes, the probing spear,
And left His body to men's busy hands.

Out, out upon this wretched pride !
The rude, rebellious heart at last obeys ;
Conditionless I take the tide,
Girt with the fisher's coat of human ways.

Ah God, upon the midnight lawns !
Oh God, on floods below and hills above,
Meet us again when morning dawns
With food prepared, the only food of love !

TO THE BOY BRIAN

THE poppy has spread out her petticoat red,
The little moon lily has lifted her head,
The flax blows blue as a fairy sea,
All waiting for thee.

The jewelled and delicate butterfly knows
Where the iris, his equal in loveliness, grows,
The snapdragon bends to the weight of the bee—
They are wiser than we.

The scornful sun on his chariot throne
Makes mock of a lover left waiting alone,
Then hurries to westward with mischievous glee ;
Be fleetier than he.

Already the shadows are far too long,
The robin is hinting at evensong ;
Why should the moon my solitude see ?
Come quickly to me.

A CHILD'S THOUGHTS

I

WHEN I'm grown up and children talk a little,
I'll never say, "You drive me wild,"
Nor answer them, "Whatever next, I wonder!"
Nor yet, "Good Heavens, what a child!"

II

When I go to bed I think of the wood,
And the still, dark pond by the willows,
Where the moorhen sits on her islet of roots
With the cold, damp sticks for pillows.
She sits alone by the sleeping pool,
She looks at the sky and ponders,
She broods on her eggs and covers them all,
And looks at the sky and wonders—
She thinks the stars were the eggs of the moon,
And wonders to see them hatched so soon.

“HIS WAYS ARE EVERLASTING”

“The perpetual hills did bow. . . .
The deep uttered His voice.”

O H holy One of everlasting ways,
Who in the primal, dim, unmeasured days
Called hill to hill from chaos, deep to deep !
Thou leddest Abram to the larger air,
The infinity of faith, and built a stair
For angel throngs where Jacob lay asleep.

And when the human soul, Thy chosen bride,
Would cast her bands, be free and purified,
Thou makest water stand upon a heap ;
Yea passion's floods that whelm th' opposing host
Are but Thy walls and ways, O Holy Ghost,
Who callest hill to hill and deep to deep.

But ah ! in what fair grove, Eternal Wind,
Didst Thou the lowly maiden Mary find,
Like some rich blossom ripe for all Thy will ?
What load of joy weighed down her body fair
Until the ground might kiss her braided hair ?
The deep shall tell the deep and hill tell hill.

“HIS WAYS ARE EVERLASTING”

In favour highest she, but not alone,
Since unto thee all virgin souls are known :

By Ganges' banks, or China's farthest steep,
Or where the vulture is the Persian's tomb
Thou overshadowest the spirit's womb,
Still calling hill to hill and deep to deep.

Yet, since we see Thee but through clouds of night,
Like Psyche, we mistrust our true delight,
And fear to wed a troll, a shape of ill ;
But Thou art Husband to our human race,
And shalt discover all Thy wondrous grace
When deep hath fled to deep and hill to hill.

Oh ! come and help us through the toil and grief
That soon shall expiate our unbelief ;
And when all tears are wept that we must weep,
Then bid our fig-trees blossom once again,
Our vines to bear, our fields to flush with grain,
Till hill shall laugh to hill, deep sing to deep.

A ROSE

THY purpled petals are like angels' lips,
Thy heart's a fragment of some lonely star,
Thy fragrance is the essential sweet of hope,
And thou a pledge whence all perfections are.

DESTINY

O LEAVE the lonely fortress of my heart
I cannot yield to thee,
But merrily the gates had swung apart
If thou hadst held the key.

A PENITENT TO HIS NEIGHBOURS

SMILING I answer : " Is that all ? "
To the worst that you can say of me ;
I owe my conscience countless pounds,
Then what's your halfpenny ?

THE BRANDED HEART

I SAW where women's hearts were hung,
Like fruit upon a tree,
And Time himself leaned on his scythe
And eyed them wearily.

One heart hung there so deeply marked,
So eaten by the flame,
That all its substance seemed to be
One sole consuming name.

And men cried out, "Find us such hearts
That our names, too, be hid
Within and heralded without!"
But Time said, "God forbid!"

"None ever branded deep as this
In the wholesome light of day,
Nor wielded tools so fiercely hot
To go unscathed away."

LE MARIAGE DE CONVENANCE

THE cost of it ! The waste of it !—this wrings
My heart. To barter love for things, things,
things !

You stand begirt with all your household store,
Yet shiver, naked to the very core.
Why, ev'n from workhouse wards may come a strain,
A song and laugh—you will not sing again.
How oft, with shame and pity, have you read
Of wretched girls who sell themselves for bread,
But who shall win you back to decency
Who sold yourself for superfluity ?
You give your money to the madhouse too,
But is the wildest there as mad as you ?
Upon a dead swan's down the head is pressed
That might have known a living lover's breast ;
And from the gold of life you turned away
To build yourself a tomb of yellow clay.

“NOT IN THE ABUNDANCE OF
THINGS”

GIVE men houses fair and costly,
Raiment white,
Let the board be spread at even,
The bed at night—
Will they sing?

Give them stalléd ox and fatlings,
Oil and wine,
Give them purple, silk and linen,
Let the sheets be fine—
They will not sing.

Paul and Silas thrown in prison,
By men accurst,
Fettered, naked, bleeding, threatened,
Hungry, cold, athirst—
These could sing.

THE LADY OF REVERIE

A LADY sat in her carven chair ;
The firelight lit her braided hair,
Showed her gown of antique grace
And dainty collar of Flanders lace :
Showed her features wan and fair
And the lines that life had chiselled there :
Showed her slender finger tips
And the baffling smile upon her lips.
Within the fire she seemed to trace
Ghosts of all that once took place,
Phantoms in procession glow,
Phantoms from the long ago,
That paled her cheek, and lined her brow,
And left her sitting lonely now
With a strangely pensive air
All alone in her carven chair.

Should I discover her heart, 'twere sin,
And hardly the lady dare look therein ;
Something I see mysterious, dark—
(Is it costly shrine, or curious ark ?)

THE LADY OF REVERIE

Wrapped about with flame and cloud,
(Is it a vail, or is it a shroud ?)
Shapes of darkness, powers of night
Strive for it, and forms of light.
O Mary Mother ! to love so well,
Is it Heaven, or is it Hell ?
For full of fate as death is love,
That coming softly like a dove
Upon his prey yet swoops and springs
With eagle beak and eagle wings,
Tears the heart o' the victim out,
Bears it hither, thither, about ;
Stabs it, tries it every way,
And if aught therein be clay,
Hurls it down from fearful height,
Down, down, down to dawnless night.

So she sits with her bleached hair,
And chiselled features wan and fair,
Thinking on the spectres ghast
Phantoms from a far-off past ;
Sits with a strange fantastic air
All alone in her carven chair,
Her head propped on her finger tips,
And a baffling smile upon her lips.

LIFE RECONCILING TO DEATH

“ Worn with toil and spent,
With many a painful step to other shrines.”

—*Eumenides*: POTTER'S Translation.

WHEN first with morning step we roam,
What magic dreams beguile
Our search to find a fairy home,
A fabled isle !

Ere noon we have relinquished all
Such dreams, and turned apart
To seek a chamber in the wall
Of one poor heart.

And then a humbler hostelry
Befits us, travel sore,
Where never enters Memory,
So low the door :

A cave of silence, strewn with cloud,
To baffle Sorrow's feet,
Secure alike from thunder loud
Or pulse's beat.

E SEMPRE BENE

BUT shall we not grow tired of joy
When bitter things are passed away ?
And will not love and beauty cloy
If unrelieved day after day ?

Fear not ! The memory of tears
Shall lend a fresh delight to bliss,
And lips, once wrung, through all the years
Shall be astonished at each kiss.

TO LEWIS CARROLL, WHO HAD
INVITED ONLY THE "VERY
YOUNG"

I WISH that I had dared to come and see
Whether you would have frowned or smiled.
Have cried, "Avaunt, avaunt, Methusalah !"
Or said, "God bless you ! little child."

SONG

Xaîpe

AS a quiet night on discordant sound,
As a gentle rain on a thirsty ground,
As a shadow falling where hart's-tongue grows,
As a sunbeam wooing a folded rose—
Thy coming was sweet.

As the petals of poppies the wind has tossed,
As the flitting of swallows before the frost,
As the passing of dew in the morning light,
As the rush of the deer on a northern height—
Thy going was fleet.

BETHLEHEM

FOR Paten and for Chalice
The crib of a humble beast—
Then bow the knees of thy spirit
To the majesty of the least.

Ἀφένται

O WAVE and wind ! O bee and chanting bird,
O angels, making harmony in Heaven,
What music have ye like that single word
Reserved for mortal ears, the word Forgiven !

But if again we own the sins of youth,
Rewrite the bitter script which Love had riven,
Then worst of all intolerable shames,
Most poignant of reproaches is—"Forgiven !"

ALLEGRA AND TRISTITIA

TRISTITIA, the dark, the pale,
Walking in night's solemnity,
Wearing the midnight's mystery
For coif and veil,

Stole all my heart away from me.
I loved her languor and her tears,
And served for her through seven years
Of slavery.

And then I seemed to clasp my prize,
And triumphed all the bridal night,
Until the over hasty light
Revealed her eyes.

Alas ! 'twas not Tristitia,
'Twas not the bride I thought to see,
Only Allegra lay by me—
For Rachel, Leah.

Yet had she seemed to lack no grace
Until I saw those purblind eyes,
Until the daylight taught me sighs,
Showed me her face.

ALLEGRA AND TRISTITIA

"She is the elder," so they said,
"Let all her rites be duly done
Then may Tristitia be won,
Then Rachel wed."

I won those eyes of strange desire,
Those eyes like wells, upon whose brink
A man may lean and drink, and drink,
Nor ever tire.

But now the spurned, the courted bride
Have gone—the happiness that failed,
And the sorrow that prevailed,
Alike have died.

Both women bare tall sons to me,
And God shall light Allegra's eyes
As when the summer suns arise
On Galilee.

My pilgrimage is almost o'er,
Tristitia hath made me wise,
But lay me where Allegra lies
For evermore.

BETHINK THEE !

“ Wonder it is to see in diverse minds
How diversely love doth his pageants play.”

ERE thou begin to love, choose well the school
Wherein to graduate, the fitting rule.
For wilt thou love with traitors who forswore
Themselves at Argos and at Elsinore,—
Set sword and serpent and the funeral pyre
For milestones on the road of thy desire ?
Wilt thou infect thy passionate lips and breath,
And be the cup that holds thy Juliet's death ?
Condemn to rosemary and asphodel
A Sigismonde or gentle Isabelle ?
Wilt thou, with Paris, set a world at strife,
Or give, with Perseus and Alcestis, life ?—
With Orpheus half redeem Eurydice
Or be thy Psyche's immortality ?

“I SAID: I AM CUT OFF”

AFTER the purple draught of bliss
It were less hard to drink of painful death ;
But I must die a chrysalis,
My wings must never know the summer's breath.

QUI TRANSTULIT SUSTINET

WHEN we would count the tale of years
And know if all our suns be set,
We have no medicine for our fears
Save “Qui transtulit sustinet.”

“O SOVEREIGN LORD, THOU LOVER
OF MEN’S SOULS”

THOU hope of all Humanity,
What of all this that meets the sight,
The blood, the tears, the misery ?
Raiment of needlework outspread
Wrought curiously with golden thread,
That my bride may be fitly adorned to-night.

But, oh thou Bridegroom of the Soul,
What of the sounds, the sounds of fear,
The groans of men, the bells that toll ?
Thou hearest the minstrels tune their lutes,
Thou hearest the young men try their flutes
For the feast of the marriage that draweth near.

Yet, oh thou Bridegroom of the Soul,
What of the mind’s captivity ?
What of the spirit’s doubt and dole ?
Out of the ebony halls of night,
Aloes, cassia, myrrh, delight,
The bride in her palace of ivory.

O SOVEREIGN LORD

Then, oh thou Bridegroom of the Soul,
What of the songs from woods new-clothed,
The laughing flowers, the sunlit knoll ?

My footsteps that follow along the shore,
My fingers about the latch and door,
My face at the window of my betrothed.

THE LAST SCENE

HER lily skin, her bronze-red hair
Glowed brightly from her dying bed,
No wonder that Death coveted
A thing so radiantly fair.
Her many friends must watch and pray
And chafe her hands and soothe her head,
And care for her till she be dead.

She was forsaken night and day,
She was forsaken of her breath,
And half forsaken, too, by Death,
Who only took her soul away :
Her poor, dark soul, unwashed, unfed,
And left her body lying there,
For all it was so white and fair.

THE ONE OBLIGATION

CARE not so much for troth to me
As for thine own integrity,
Lest I be robbed of my delight,
Which is to know thou art alway
(With me or with another may),
A “very parfait gentle knight.”

A DISCLAIMER

YOU said that love should be your diadem—
Love never put that brand upon your brow.
That it should be your Star of Bethlehem—
Love did not lead you where you wander now.

“THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH”

O BRIDE most blessed ! If, as many say,
The ardour of thy first betrothal be
A little quieted, yet, day by day,
Approaching nearer to maturity,
Conforming to His likeness unaware,
And tuned to His accord,
Thou canst more intimately share
The counsels of thy Lord.

Mother belov'd ! With laver and with bread,
With patient ear and white, maternal knees ;
For every child a green and quiet bed,
And all his Father's wealth beneath thy keys ;
Well may the Enemy of souls deplore
Thy presence on the earth,
And angels, wondering, adore
The Love that gave thee birth !

A ROOT OF DOUBT

YOU doubt if there be any God ?
Doubt is the torpid man's complaint ;
Still hibernating 'neath your clod,
Your sins and virtues grow too faint.
But come where life is all ablow :
Be a murderer, or a saint,
And you will know.

IN GADARA

WE'VE heard about the loaves and fishes,
Cana's wine ;
We've seen Thee giving life and reason,
But wilt Thou give us swine ?

COME AWAY !

AH, love ! Come away with me
To where the purple islands be ;
To islands in the Southern sea,
Where the kindly breadfruit grows
And the red hibiscus blows,
Come away with me !

Come soon, for fear of death, the thief ;
Make me a bed of fern and leaf
Where I may sleep away my grief :
Sleep away the sad fatigue
Lying southward league on league,
Come, for time is brief.

And I in turn will heap thee high
The scented leaves and grasses dry,
And at my lord's feet softly lie
Till the peerless Southern dawn
Call to some enchanted lawn
New delights to try.

COME AWAY !

And then to range the island round
And share the harvest we have found
Beside our fire upon the ground ;
 Till reflected in thine eyes,
 Fairer stars than these arise,
So may joys abound !

Come, love ! Come away with me :
If we return all men shall see
The afterglow of ecstasy !
 In our eyes a light, a gleam,
 Deep within our eyes a dream,
A magic memory.

BAFFLED

WHENEVER I am fain to bless
 My Solitude, my chosen bride,
Behind, before her, or beside
 I see her shadow, Loneliness.

SALISBURY PLAIN

WHEN hurricanes blow I love to be hurled
On that eerie plain
Where the wind in pain
Wanders with wolfish eye ;
Where the peewits fly
With their mournful cry,
Like souls from the underworld.

Where the spirits of dead men under the sod
At midnight deep
Are awaked from sleep
To whirl in the wind and wail ;
And the pillars pale
Tell their awful tale
Of the wrestlings of man with God.

BLIND, YET MAKING MANY SEE

SHE brought with her the freshness of the morn,
The vivid beauty of a harvest scene ;
Her glowing skin was like the ripened corn,
Her lips the poppies that do blow between.
All dusky was her hair, as when there lies
Deep shadow underneath the elms, a boon
To weary reapers in the scorching noon ;
And lo ! God's peace was laid upon her eyes.

Her presence had the richness of a rose
That blooms alone in some still garden place ;
She moved melodiously, as water flows,
And tranquil visions floated round her face,
Or like fine odours drifted from her gown,
Of English lanes, and hazel-shaded stiles,
Or gabled roofs, and fluted, crimson tiles
Of some old water-fondled, Flemish town.

Men saw no more the blinding stony street,
But stood where beeches build the fanes of rest ;
They heard no more the tramp of aching feet,
But sound of some cool stream across whose breast
In sweet abandonment a willow lies.

She had day's radiance with the calm of night,
And few despair of peace who saw the light
Wherewith God starred the darkness of her eyes.

PROUD LOVE

PROUD love is not a foaming tide,
And if you would be delicate,
Come only to the water side
And dip your dainty feet therein ;
Among the shallows hesitate,
No lawless wave will kiss your chin.

But if adventure stir your blood,
And you are proof against regret,
Plunge in and float upon the flood
And travel down through banks of green
To seas you have not tempted yet,
And lands you have not seen.

THE SCHOOLMISTRESS

IF she, their nurse, be faint with famine,
How shall the foster babes be fed?
Lead her, O God, where Cherith floweth,
Bid birds and angels bring her bread.

BENEATH THE JUNIPER

AH Lord, in vain did I aspire
To serve. Now to be dead
Is all I ask,
All my desire—
And lo, the angel's bread,
The crowning task
Cleft floods, and chariots of fire !

EXPERIENCE

NO pain can nullify the boon of birth,
And who would take the sweet, yet grudge
the dole,

Have Jacob's dream, yet shun his bed of earth,
Prevail with God, yet keep the sinew whole?

For forty days on Horeb's awful height

Who would not barter Eshcol's vintage rare,

Pomegranates, figs, the long expected land,

Yea all that Nebo showed the straining sight

Of storied woods, deep streams and pastures fair,

From Jordan's banks to Sharon's blinding strand?

Who would not brave the whirlwind and the fire

(Most dreadful prelude !) for the dulcet tones

And single music of a silver lyre

As God Himself His fearful servant owns?

Who would not as a thunderbolt be hurled

To blast a perjured queen and impious king,

To blaze on Carmel terrible and grand,

Arouse a woman-cowed and craven world,

Feed from a raven's or an angel's wing,

Then flash back flaming to the Hurler's Hand.

EXPERIENCE

I would not shirk the hour of deep despair
 Beneath the juniper, nor that fierce grief
The patriarch on Mount Moriah bare,
 While yet the watching Heaven withheld relief ;
But not to suffer basely, would I crave,
 Clinging to Sodom spite of angel goad
 And hand ; or clamouring for quails, to find
Therewith leanness of soul : a murmuring slave,
 Desiring Canaan, fearful of the road,
 And fretful for the fleshpots left behind.

TO LIFE

THE keen pursuit is more than captive prey,
 Mine be the ringing steel, the flashing sword ;
I claim the fight, and not the victor's bay—
 Then sound the onset ! Chance the last award !

“PRO PATRIBUS TUIS NATI SUNT
TIBI FILII”

SING not for ever of the isles of Greece,
Or seven purple hills of glorious Rome,
Here Jason seeks the golden Colchian fleece,
Here Aphrodite rises from the foam
And she-wolves suckle heroes, though thine eyes
Turn only where forgotten sunsets linger in the skies.

Apollo did not always pipe ; his hand
Could be as vile as carrion vulture's beak.
Uncomely showed Absyrtus on the strand,
And Atreus' dish whereat the sun grew weak.
Looked Pentheus lovely whom his mother tore,
Or those red limbs the Thracian women left by
Hebrus' shore ?

And when to silent stars the lone bird sings
In trembling ecstasy, and uttereth
All dimly comprehended hidden things,
The sting of life, the secret sweet of death,
The fount of love that fills pale sorrow's well,
Why then remember Itys' horrid fate or Philomel ?

PRO PATRIBUS

And yet—the lips caress each honied name
Enamoured of its sweetness. Glamour lies
Like rainbow lighted mist around each fame :
Diana's swift white limbs and wide grey eyes,
Young Adon's wishless boyhood, Thetis' feet
Revealed for one bright moment as when two streams
meet

An odour fugitive and sudden gleam
Show where the careless and impetuous spray
Has caught a rose that fell across the stream ;
Or hamadryads at their lilting play,
Half seen and half suspected by some shy
And virgin shepherd lad, with flower-swept feet and
dew-washed eyes

Not unprepared for such encounter sweet.
In those days reeds sang lyrics, one might lend
The long day to their hearing, screened from heat
By laurels with whose fragrant sighs still blend
Apollo's kisses, till, all silently,
Love's star appeared and day was rounded off with
ecstasy.

Across the years and o'er the seas that beat
Between is wafted still a subtle scent,
Amaracus and lilies pressed by feet
Of unreturning deities. And, blent

PRO PATRIBUS

With music of their passing robes, is breath
Of ambergris and spikenard which yet clings, as
when rough death

Has carried some devoted maiden where
Her beauty needs no veil, after long years
One takes her raiment, laid aside with care,
And shakes it out, and notes, mid blinding tears,
Aroma of the rose and lavender,
So with the speaking of each lovely name rich odours
stir.

Not distance, merely, can distil such balm,
But those inhabitants of fairy skies,
Of far-off seas and fabled isles, with calm
Unruffled brow, firm step and level eyes,
Moved each toward a well-determined goal
Of passion or revenge, of life or death, and fed the
soul

With her desire, unfettered by the fear
Of sin ; and not as we, who hardly long
For heav'n, but faint and tremble at the drear
Alternative of hell. They knew no wrong
But impotence. Their happy race attained
The days of pearl, the perfect days of childhood all
unstained,

PRO PATRIBUS

Untroubled, by the restlessness and fret,
The feverish approach of nubile age,
But we have lost our early grace, nor yet
Have won the strength of manhood, nor the sage
And quiet temper of maturity ;
Yet wistful retrospect will never conquer destiny,

For all those darling, dreamlike days are fled.
No Hercules may snatch them from the past
Nor any Orpheus charm. For "Pan is dead,"
As when the silver moon is sunk at last
No more her frown, nor mystic smile can sway,
But fickle time neglects her for her golden rival—day.

The gods have left Olympus. No green sod
Shall kiss their feet again ; no golden shore
Shall woo them from the wave. What then if God,
Tired of the fitful intercourse of yore,
Should come within the scope of human ken,
Should leave His lonely height to dwell familiarly
with men ?

What if He be among us but so near
As hardly to be visible at all ?
We wait the seeing eye, the hearing ear,
And Samuel's heart to heed the midnight call :
A Homer singing of a nobler host,
And new Theophanies, in Iliads of the Holy Ghost.

PRO PATRIBUS

One who shall sow with green our barren floor
And plant with roses all the ways of Death,
Disclose the pearls of pain, and golden ore
Of twice-blessed grief, until with even breath
We take the road, and scorn our former sloth
And stall-fed ease ; not flinching like untutored colts
who, loath

To face some fancied danger, leave the way,
And, plunging down the precipices, woo
Their own destruction. All our singers say
Life is unlovely now, and poor, yet who
Will die ? What Curtius or Antigone ?
Of those who most do chant the bygone age's elegy

Will any burn, with Scaevola, a hand,
Or sacrifice a breast with those who ruled
Along the Euxine shore ? And if our land
Yield less voluptuous gifts, are we more schooled
In Spartan use, and that ascetic fair
Men saw in young Hippolytus, like aureole on his hair ?

Reluctantly we own we know the goal
And way. For all must see the long white road
The prophets laid. There, conscience doth patrol
To smite with two-edged sword and flaming goad
All wandering feet. And though in search of ease
Some seek enticing plains, they hear the burden of the
breeze,

PRO PATRIBUS

The blood of brothers crying, and they dread,
Lest after all, a God can hear it too.
But hand in hand the happier pilgrims tread,
And have the Mount Delectable in view,
The strongest tarry most to help the weak,
And make no anxious haste, as having that which yet
they seek.

And some no vision cheers, and yet they keep
Their upward course, nor care to turn them back ;
They doubt the end, but love the way—the steep
Ascent—the grandeur of the Alpine track—
And prize one little gentian's sapphire sea
Beyond all lowland blaze of marigold or peony.

Their songs are in their heart. But those who run
Astray for every bird and butterfly,
When lying in some thorny pit, undone,
Can utter many a studied plaintive cry.
Left in the desert they in vain would think
They hate the way to those clear springs of which
they will not drink.

A "God in perfect beauty," Him we seek ;
The living rose that must excel the bloom
On any painted page. Our eyes are weak ;
Our childish taste, trained in the gaudy room
Of sensual joys, rejects the Perfect Word,
The things eye hath not seen, nor heart conceived,
nor ear hath heard.

PRO PATRIBUS

Yet we have had our Francis and Terése,
Our Bernard, Galahad, and Joan of France,
And even now in many hidden ways
Walk heroes, though no halo of romance
Can crown them, till the poet whom we wait
Shall lead us to the future through his golden arch
and gate.

FROM THE FRENCH OF
LOUISE LABÉ

EACH night my spirit is a homing bee,
And scarcely waits till Sleep, at eventide,
Has thrown the gates of Time and Distance wide,
Before it flies, incontinent, to thee.
Then do I seem to know felicity ;
Then comes the consummation long denied,
And on this heart so often racked and tried
Another heart is beating tenderly.

O fair and gentle Sleep ! O Night of gold,
Sweet Rest, and Fancy dear as summer dews,
Still weave your webs about the selfsame theme.
And if my longing arms may never hold
Substantial love ; if waking Truth refuse,
At least let Semblance bless me in a dream !

FROM GOETHE

THE heights are wrapped in sleep,
Hill on hill.

Hushed is the forest deep,
Songless and still.

From East to West
One stirless, dreamless noon,
Ah wait ! Soon, soon
Thou too shalt rest.

ALL SOULS DAY

FOUNDED ON THE GERMAN OF FERDINAND VON SAAR

WILD and wan, and chill,
It is the Feast of Souls !
A cold grey cloud
For sheet and shroud
Wraps God's Acre on the hill,
Where the folded dead lie still—
It is the Feast of Souls !

The twinkling grave-lights shine
Upon the steep hillside,
As though night shed
Above the dead
Her stars for tears, and kind hands twine
Emblem, wreath, and funeral vine
Upon the steep hillside.

With consecrated flame
Each sepulchre is lit,
And hung with thought
Of flowers caught
In bronze or marble. Each can claim
Some share in memory or fame,
Each sepulchre is lit.

ALL SOULS DAY

What of the homeless dead ?
What of the nameless ones
Who knew no bier,
No tender tear,
Whose far, unechoing footsteps led
From birth to death uncomfited—
What of the nameless ones ?

Ah ! thoughts are dedicate
To-day to those unknown.
One, worn with life,
Distress and strife,
As they were, and as desolate,
Stands shuddering, compassionate,
And in their dark and silent fate
Anticipates his own.

TO A CERTAIN GOOD GENI

OF these, my fancies argosies,
Yours are the deepest laden ships.
You know the spell that launched them all—
A kiss upon the lips.



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